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2020

### Academic ESL World History Unit 2.3. Ancient Greece Reading, Define, Explain

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### **3. ANCIENT GREECE: READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

**Source:** <https://www.ancient.eu/article/141/law-and-politics-in-the-athenian-agora-ancient-dem/>

**Watch the YouTube video before you do the assignment!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsOZujLI4X4>

#### **Introduction:**

This reading will walk you through the social and political structures of Ancient Greece and Athens, the most important city-state during this period. A city -state is an independent city that operates like a small country. It has a government, a law-system, and its own military. Compared to Mesopotamia, Athens demonstrates how the city had brought organization of society to a new and complex level, both culturally and politically. In this reading you will also observe how writing offers humans a powerful tool to keep records, maintain a powerful administration, a legal system and finally, a unique form of government. As you explore the reading, think about the following question: How do we know these facts? Which scientific disciplines are involved in uncovering history and human cultural evolution?

#### **Ancient Greece - Describe, Define, Explain**

The reading on Ancient Greece is concentrated on a lot of important concepts that we still use in our modern government systems today. In fact, many of the words you will come across are of Greek origin and part of our everyday language. For example, we all use words like police, politics, metropolitan, democracy, pharmacy etc. daily without thinking of it as Greek. Further, this text and exercise will help you understand the value of defining and explaining a concept or an idea. When you try to define a concept and explain it in your own words, you not only understand it better, but you utilize your own vocabulary and language skills to express the meaning of the idea or the concept. It is important to use as many words as possible on a regular basis to make them “stick”. With a passive knowledge of vocabulary, meaning you do not actively use it, you often use the same words repeatedly. This exercise will help you explore and test different words so you become comfortable expressing complex ideas in words you eventually will feel are your “own”.

#### **A. BEFORE YOU READ**

1. The Agora was an important meeting place in Athens. Think of the marketplace in your hometown. Try to describe it: What is happening there? What is it like? Who is there? Which feelings do best describe the atmosphere and the people? Is it a positive feeling? If so, why? Write your thoughts in the box below.

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2. Which adjectives (description) and verbs (activity) do best describe the marketplace

Adjectives (What is it like?)	Verbs (Activities)

3. Trace the definitions of the concepts in the text. Fill in the definitions, then explain in your own words what you think they mean. Add an example.

Concept	Definition	Explain in your own words. Add an example.
Democracy		
Tyranny		
Oligarchy		
Monarchy		

4. Free Writing: Which role should a citizen play in society in your opinion?  
Write for 5 min.

## B. Reading Activity

1. Scan the text for the following concepts. Write them down and find the matching definitions in the text. In the third column, explain the meaning in your own words.

Concept	Definition in the text	Explain
Agora		
Prytaneis		
New Bouleterion		
Metroon		

### 2. Comprehension Questions. Answer in full sentences. Do not copy from the text.

- a. What was the role of the Archon King? What would be his function or title in our present society?
- b. Explain the role of the “public information station”.
- c. What is a litigation? Explain.
- d. What is the difference between the Athenian jury and today’s U.S. jury, according to the text?

### 3. Ancient Greek Government

#### a. How do we know?

What does the text say about the sources of facts concerning the Greek political system? In other words, how do we know these historical facts?

**b. Read the quote carefully:**

*“The government systems of ancient Greece were varied as the Greeks searched for the answers to such fundamental questions as who should rule and how? Should **sovereignty** (kyrion) lie in the **rule of law** (nomoi), the **constitution** (politea), **officials**, or **the citizens**? Not settling on a definitive answer to these questions, government in the ancient Greek world, therefore, took extraordinarily diverse forms and, across different city-states and over many centuries, political power could rest in the hands of a single individual, an elite or in every male citizen: democracy - widely regarded as the Greeks' greatest contribution to civilization.”*

Think of the question: Should sovereignty (kyrion) lie in the rule of law (nomoi), the constitution (politea), officials, or the citizens?

What do you think is the situation in the U.S. today?

Based on your experience or knowledge about the world, which different examples can you relate to?

**c. About Athenian Democracy - Answer in full sentences**

1. Pick five important facts that caught your attention in the reading about Democracy. Write down your reflective comments in the second column.

FACTS	REFLECTIVE COMMENTS: Why is this interesting?

2. Choose **one** of the government concepts: Monarchy, Tyranny, Oligarchy Summarize the information in the text. Quote if necessary.

Concept	What does the text say?
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2. Paragraph Writing: Go back to your description of the marketplace and your writing about the role of the citizen in society. What are the similarities and the differences between “your marketplace”, your idea of the citizen, and the Agora in Athens? Write a full paragraph with topic sentence, development of ideas and examples.